

## **Preface**

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) is the first comprehensive and representative school-based study of youth smoking knowledge, attitudes and beliefs conducted in Uttar Pradesh (UP). This study, which was conducted by School of Preventive Oncology, Patna in collaboration with Tata Institute of Fundamental research Mumbai, used an internationally standardized instrument that facilitates comparing youth behaviour regarding tobacco use at the regional as well as the international level.

Moreover, the study design, data collection and analysis were carried under the direct supervision of the office of Tobacco and Health- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (OSH/CDC) and the Tobacco Free Initiative South East Asia Regional Office of the World Health Organization (TFI/SEARO/WHO).

## **Introduction**

Tobacco use is one of the chief preventable causes of death in the world. The World Health Organization attributes some four million deaths year to tobacco use, a figure expected to rise to about 8.4 million by the year 2020. By that time, 70% of those deaths will occur in developing countries. Most people begin using tobacco in their teens, and recent trends indicate rising smoking prevalence rates among children and adolescents and earlier age of initiation. If these patterns continue, tobacco will result in the deaths of 250 million children and adolescents alive today, many of them in the developing world<sup>1</sup>. In India tobacco use is estimated to cause 800,000 deaths annually <sup>2</sup>.

The international society, spearhead by the Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office on Smoking and Health (OSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has been developing international programs and initiatives to combat this man-made plague which is devastating the lives of millions of people worldwide. However, regardless of the worldwide movement against tobacco, tobacco companies still control the tobacco market. They produce over one trillion sticks, over a billion smokers and influences ever increasing people, especially the young to start smoking every year.

Despite the harm caused by smoking only modest success has been achieved in global tobacco control. It is clear that children and young people are now more at risk than over before; and they should be the primary focus for intervention strategies.

Uttar Pradesh is geographically located at latitude 27.40 N Longitude: 80.00 E, covering a population of 166,052,859 (87,466,301, Men 78,586,558 women) at a decadal growth rate 25.8%. Density (per sq. km.) was 689 with a sex ratio 898 women per 1000 men and literacy rate was 57.36 (70.2% Men, 42.9 % women).<sup>3</sup>

Uttar Pradesh is the third largest cultivator of tobacco leaf in India. Tobacco is produced mainly in Mainpuri, Muradabad, Farrukhabad and Etah districts in UP<sup>4</sup>. Production of dry tobacco leaf in UP has increased from 78800 tones in 1990 to 152400 tones in 1998, almost doubled<sup>4</sup>. There are many Cigarette and gutka factories in the state.

Rules and regulations for tobacco use control in the State are almost absent.

Accurate and representative prevalence data on tobacco use among children and young adults are not available. However, the National family health survey conducted in UP in

1998-99 revealed that 34.0% of adult males and 3.1% of adult females were current smokers and 36.3% of adult males and 11.4% of adult females were current chewers<sup>5</sup>. There are few reports from some districts on community interventions with good results<sup>6</sup> but tobacco control in most of the areas is almost negligible.

The GYTS is a schools-based tobacco specific survey which focuses on adolescent's age 13-15 years (grades 7-10). It assesses students' attitudes, knowledge and behaviour related to tobacco use and exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), as well as youth exposure to prevention activities in school curricula<sup>7</sup>. Community programs and media messages aimed at preventing and reducing youth tobacco use. Also the GYTS provides information on where tobacco products are obtained and used, as well as the effectiveness of enforcement measures.

The GYTS will attempt to address the following issues:

- Determining the level of tobacco use.
- Estimating the age of initiation of cigarette use.
- Estimating the levels of susceptibility to become a cigarette smoker.
- Estimating the exposure to tobacco advertising.
- Identifying key intervening variable, such as attitudes and beliefs on behavioural norms with regard to tobacco use among young people
- Assessing the extent to which major prevention programs are reaching school-based populations and establish the subjective opinions of those populations regarding such interventions.